

FULL VERSION OF PENDING CLAIMS

1 Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A heterodyne interferometer system with carrier phase
2 modulation comprising:
3 a laser light source;
4 a phase modulator positioned to receive a beam from the laser light source and
5 apply a sinusoidal carrier phase modulation;
6 a frequency shifter for shifting the frequency of a target beam and a local beam
7 emanating from the phase modulator, the difference between the target beam frequency and the
8 local beam frequency designated as the heterodyne frequency f ,
9 a reference photodetector;
10 a signal photodetector;
11 a beam splitter for deflecting a portion of the target beam and local beam to the
12 reference photodetector and directing another portion of the target beam and local beam to a
13 polarizing beam splitter;
14 a polarizing beam splitter for directing the local beam directly to the signal
15 photodetector, and for directing the target beam to a pair of reflectors separated in distance by L_s
16 the reflected target beam being returned by the separated reflectors to the polarizing beam
17 splitter, the reflected target beam being directed to the signal photodetector;
18 a signal mixer for mixing the phase-modulation frequency with the output of the
19 signal photodetector to shift the target signal to the heterodyne frequency f and shifting a self-
20 interference signal into sidebands about the modulation frequency;
21 a bandpass filter at the heterodyne frequency f to isolate the target signal and
22 exclude the self-interference signal; and

23 a phase meter to receive signals from the reference photodetector and compare the
24 phase with a phase of the target signal filtered by the bandpass filter.

1 Claim 2 (Original): The heterodyne interferometer system of claim 1 wherein the
2 phase modulation frequency is selected to optimize the target signal having traveled the distance
3 L.

1 Claim 3 (Original): The heterodyne interferometer system of claim 1 wherein the
2 target beam and the local beam are polarized in orthogonal planes.

1 Claim 4 (Original): The heterodyne interferometer system of claim 1 wherein the
2 target beam is synchronously demodulated at the phase modulation frequency.

1 Claim 5 (Original): The heterodyne interferometer system of claim 1 wherein the
2 self-interference signal is suppressed by a factor of L/L_{INT} .

1 Claim 6 (Original): The heterodyne interferometer system of claim 1 further
2 comprising a second frequency shifter.

1 Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A heterodyne interferometer comprising:
2 a light source for providing a carrier signal;
3 a modulator for modulating the carrier signal;
4 a target path for directing a first portion of the modulated carrier signal to a target;
5 a reference path for directing a second portion of the modulated carrier signal to
6 an optical reference location; and

7 a ~~compariter~~ comparator for comparing the first portion of the modulated carrier
8 signal with the second portion of the modulated carrier signal to determine a distance between
9 the target and a fixed point.

1 Claim 8 (Original): The heterodyne interferometer of Claim 7 wherein the
2 modulator applies a phase modulation at a modulation frequency to the carrier signal, and
3 wherein the first portion of the modulated carrier signal is demodulated at the modulation
4 frequency after being directed to the target.

1 Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The heterodyne interferometer of Claim 8 further
2 comprising a frequency shifter for shifting the frequency of the carrier signal prior to the
3 directing of the first and second portions of the carrier signal to the target and optical reference
4 location, respectively.

1 Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The heterodyne interferometer of Claim 8
2 wherein the ~~compariter~~ comparator comprises an intensity ~~compariter~~ comparator to discriminate
3 between a signal traveling from the target with a parasitic self-interference signal.

1 Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A method for distinguishing a target signal in a
2 heterodyne interferometer with a parasitic interference signal comprising the steps of:
3 providing a signal source to deliver a carrier signal;
4 applying a modulation to the carrier signal, where said modulation is selected
5 from one of phase modulation and frequency modulation;

6 directing a first portion of the modulated carrier signal to a path that includes a
7 target and ends at an optical reference location, where the heterodyne interferometer evaluates a
8 distance between a fixed location and the target;

9 directing a second portion of the modulated carrier signal to a the optical
10 reference location, the first portion and the second portion generating an interference intensity
11 modulation including a parasitic self-interference;

12 demodulating the first portion of the modulated carrier signal at a frequency
13 selected based upon the modulation of the carrier signal; and

14 evaluating ~~an~~ the interference intensity modulation to discriminate between a the
15 parasitic self-interference and a the portion of the modulated carrier signal that has traveled to
16 the target.

1 Claim 12 (Original): The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of
2 shifting the frequency of the carrier signal prior to directing the first and second portions of the
3 modulated carrier signal.

1 Claim 13 (Cancelled)

1 Claim 14 (Currently Amended): A method for filtering a self-interference signal
2 in a heterodyne interferometer from a true signal based on a phase difference between the self-
3 interference signal and the true signal comprising the steps of:

4 providing a carrier signal;

5 phase modulating the carrier signal at a modulation frequency Ω ;

6 directing a first portion of the modulated carrier signal to a target and providing
7 for a return of the first portion of the modulated carrier signal from the target to an optical

8 reference location, the first portion of the modulated carrier signal having traveled to and from
9 the target being designated as a true signal;

10 directing a second portion of the modulated carrier signal to the optical reference
11 location, the second portion of the modulated carrier signal being designated as a self-
12 interference signal;

13 providing a photodetector for receiving both the true signal and ~~an~~ the self-
14 interference signal, the photodetector being located adjacent to the optical reference location;

15 demodulating the output of the photodetector at the modulation frequency Ω to
16 isolate the self-interference signal from the true signal; and

17 filtering the self-interference signal from the true signal based on the isolation of
18 the previous step.

1 Claim 15 (new): A heterodyne interferometer system with carrier phase modulation
2 comprising:

3 a laser light source for emanating a beam of laser light;

4 a phase modulator positioned to receive the beam from the laser light source and
5 apply a sinusoidal carrier phase modulation having a phase modulation frequency Ω to the beam,
6 the phase modulator emanating a target beam and a local beam;

7 a first frequency shifter for shifting the frequency of the target beam based on a
8 first frequency f_1 ;

9 a second frequency shifter for shifting the frequency of the local beam based on a
10 second frequency f_2 , wherein the difference between the shifted target beam frequency and the
11 shifted local beam frequency is a heterodyne frequency f ,

12 a reference photodetector for producing an output indicating a reference phase;

13 a signal photodetector for producing an output indicating a signal phase, the
14 signal photodetector output including a target signal and a self-interference signal;

15 a beam splitter for deflecting a portion of the target beam and local beam to the
16 reference photodetector and directing another portion of the target beam and local beam to a
17 polarizing beam splitter;

18 a polarizing beam splitter for transmitting the local beam directly to the signal
19 photodetector and for deflecting the target beam to a target reflector, the target reflector returning
20 light toward the polarizing beam splitter;

21 a first quarter-wave plate disposed between the polarizing beam splitter and the
22 target reflector, the first quarter-wave plate being oriented to rotate the polarization of the
23 returning light from the target reflector by 90 degrees, wherein the returning light from the target
24 reflector is transmitted through the polarizing beam splitter toward a reference reflector, the
25 reference reflector returning light toward the polarizing beam splitter;

26 a second quarter-wave plate disposed between the polarizing beam splitter and the
27 reference reflector, the second quarter-wave plate being oriented to rotate the polarization of the
28 returning light from the reference reflector by 90 degrees, wherein the target reflector and the
29 reference reflector are separated by a distance L, the reflected light from the reference reflector
30 being deflected by the polarizing beam splitter to the signal photodetector;

31 a signal mixer for mixing the phase-modulation frequency Ω with the output of
32 the signal photodetector to shift the target signal to the heterodyne frequency f and shift the self-
33 interference signal into sidebands about the phase modulation frequency;

34 a bandpass filter at the heterodyne frequency f to isolate the target signal and
35 exclude the self-interference signal, the bandpass filter producing an output including the
36 isolated target signal; and
37 a phase meter to receive the output from the reference photodetector and the
38 output from the bandpass filter and compare the reference phase with the target signal phase, the
39 comparison of the reference phase with the target signal phase producing an output indicating the
40 measurement of the distance L .

1 Claim 16 (new): The heterodyne interferometer system with carrier phase modulation of
2 Claim 15,
3 wherein the phase-modulation frequency Ω is 7.5 MHz.

1 Claim 17 (new): The heterodyne interferometer system with carrier phase modulation of
2 Claim 15,
3 wherein the reference phase is detected by a heterodyne frequency beat.

1 Claim 18 (new): The heterodyne interferometer system with carrier phase modulation of
2 Claim 15,
3 wherein the signal phase is detected by a heterodyne frequency beat.